

# Tourism E-news

Tennessee Department of Tourist Development



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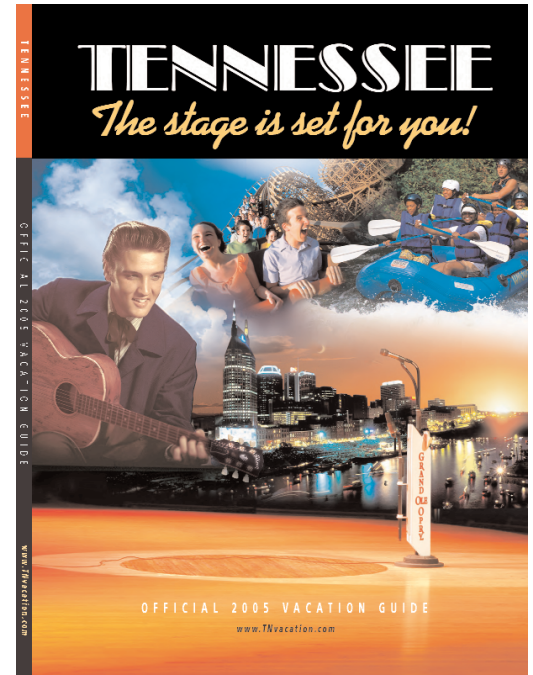
## Tennessee's 2005 Visitor Guide Hits the Streets

The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development's 2005 Vacation Guide goes into distribution next week.

The new guide features 168 pages and highlights the state's three grand divisions. To obtain your copy of the 2005 Guide, visit [www.TNvacation.com](http://www.TNvacation.com) or call 1-800-GO2-TENN.

"We're very excited with how the 2005 Guide looks and the wealth of information it delivers to our visitors," said Commissioner Susan Whitaker. "I think our industry partners will be pleased with the vibrant colors in the photographs and design as well as the attention-grabbing editorial features."

For more information about the 2005 Guide or how to be included in the 2006 Guide, please contact communications director Keith Britt, 615-741-9010. ■

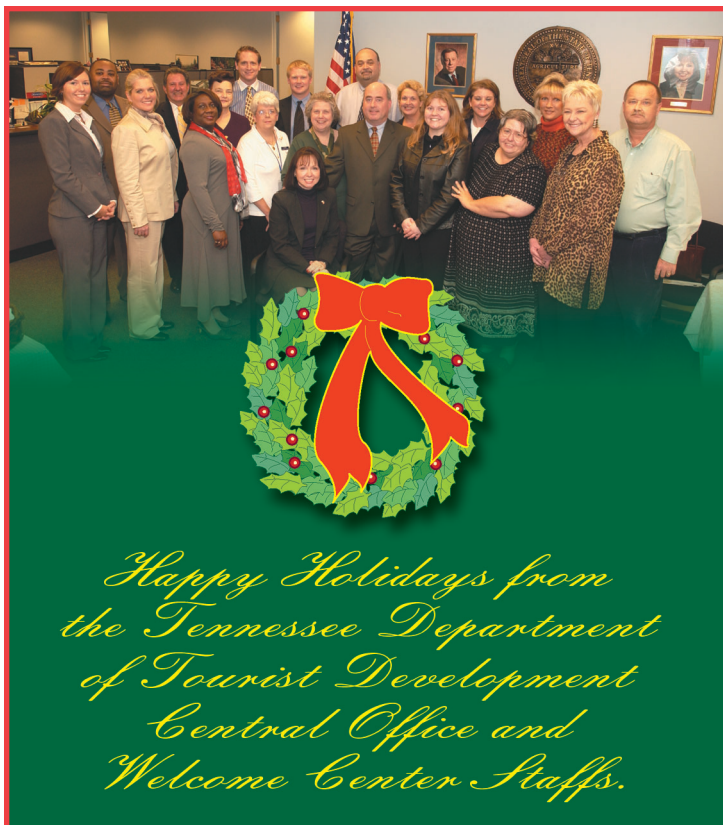


## Tourism Industry Honors State Leaders January 11 with Salute to the Legislature

The annual tourism industry reception for the Tennessee Legislature will be held 5:30 – 7 p.m., Tuesday, January 11 at the Sheraton Downtown in Nashville. Tickets are \$100 per person and can be ordered by visiting the Tennessee Tourism Roundtable (TTR) Web site at [www.tennesseetourismroundtable.com](http://www.tennesseetourismroundtable.com), or by contacting executive director Cindy Bruce, 423-648-2121 by January 5. TTR produces the Salute event annually.

"The festive and relaxed atmosphere of this event makes it a great place to welcome our elected officials, meet their families and key staff, and network with other industry professionals," said Claudia Moody, TTR board chairman.

Tourism is the state's second largest industry employing more than 175,000 people and with state tax receipts of more than \$566 million. ■



## *Tennessee Department of Tourist Development On The Road*

Staff members of the TDTD have been busy in the last month hosting media tours, hitting the road for sales missions and working with industry partners throughout the state. Some of the departments "On The Road" highlights include:

Commissioner Susan Whitaker flew with Governor Phil Bredesen and several other commissioners to **Camp Shelby, Miss.**, on Nov. 11 for a ceremony to honor members of the **278th Regimental Combat Team**, who were being deployed to Iraq. The 278th is Tennessee's largest National Guard unit with some 4,000 soldiers.

Whitaker also joined **Commissioner of Agriculture Ken Givens** in November on a fact-finding agri-tourism trip to **Tamarack Cultural Center in Beckley, West Virginia**. Tamarack is the nation's first and only statewide collection of hand-made crafts, arts and cuisine. The facility offers visitors 59,000 square feet of juried crafts, working art studios, theaters, wildlife, festival meadows, trails, gardens, and West Virginia foods. Governor Bredesen asked Commissioners Whitaker and Givens to visit Tamarack in order to research the possibility of creating a similar center in Tennessee.

The commissioner also spoke to civic groups in **Murfreesboro, Gallatin, Pigeon Forge and Monteagle**.

The holidays in Tennessee took center stage in a series of television appearances by Commissioner Whitaker. She promoted holiday events and festivals and talked about the economic importance of the state's tourism industry on morning talk shows in **Chattanooga, Nashville and Knoxville**.

East Tennessee regional marketing and public relations manager **Nicky Reynolds** spent a great deal of the time on the road working with media through East Tennessee and as a host on the department's travel writer tour in Middle Tennessee. Reynolds also attended the **Middle East Tennessee Tourism Council (METTC)** and **Southeast Tennessee Tourism Association** quarterly meetings. Along with Reynolds, assistant commissioner **Phyllis Qualls-Brooks** and communications director **Keith Britt** attended the METTC awards luncheon Nov. 30 at Christopher Place. During the meeting, **Deverce Quinton Parrott of Newport** was honored as the METTC Excellence in Tourism's Volunteer of the Year.

The new award program is designed to highlight destination marketing organizations and individual volunteers who significantly contribute to the region's economy through tourism promotion and development, said **METTC executive director April Montgomery**.

Other METTC award winners included the **Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce** for Excellence in Special Events for a Small Hospitality Organization, the **Oak Ridge Convention and Visitors Bureau** for Excellence in Special Projects for a Small Hospitality Organization, the **Gatlinburg Department of Tourism Development** for Excellence in Advertising/Promotions for a Large Hospitality Organization, and the **Knoxville Tourism and Sports Corporation** for Excellence in Special Events for a Large Hospitality Organization.

Middle Tennessee regional marketing and public relations manager **Derrick Smith** held a media relations seminar in Jackson for industry partners in West Tennessee. He also spoke to the **Giles County Economic Development Institute** on the role of tourism in economic development.

Smith represented the department at the **Natchez Trace Compact** meeting in **Jackson, Miss.**, in December and spoke to the **Leadership McNairy Class** in November. He also spent a week hosting national travel writers during the department's Middle Tennessee press tour.

**Director of Sales Lee Curtis** traveled to **Canada** and **New Orleans** selling Tennessee. The department hosted more than 70 tour operators for a dinner at the **National Tour Association's** (now named CrossSphere) annual convention in Toronto in November. Curtis, Qualls-Brooks and other Tennessee industry leaders hosted the dinner. In addition, Curtis traveled to New Orleans in December for the **Rhythms of the South** trade show. She also hit the road for sales missions in **Los Angeles** and **Phoenix**. January will be a busy month for the department's sales efforts with travel and trade shows in **Atlanta, Louisville, Indianapolis** and **Chattanooga**.

### **TDTD Hosts National Media for Middle Tennessee Tour**

Twenty-six travel and feature writers from around the country descended on Middle Tennessee Nov. 7-13 for the department's fall press tour, coordinated by Geiger & Associates.

The department worked with Geiger to develop a variety of interest tracks for the writers including golf, outdoor adventure, arts and crafts, and Tennessee heritage.

The golf track visited Henry Horton State Park, Bear Trace at Tims Ford, Bear Creek at Ross Creek Landing, Bear Trace at Chickasaw, and Montgomery Bell State Resort Park.

The arts and crafts group traveled the Cumberland Craft Trail visiting with a number of the state's wonderful artisans in Smithville, Cannon County, Monterey, Cookeville, Walling, Woodbury, Brown View Forge, Christiana, Murfreesboro, Ashland City, Clarksville, Charlotte, Dickson, and Nashville.

A number of writers delved in the state's unique history by visiting the horse country of Middle Tennessee and hitting a number of historic locales in Shelbyville, Normandy, Lynchburg, Kelso, Clarksville, Nashville, Collinsville, Columbia, Murfreesboro, Smyrna, Franklin, and Leipers Fork.

Outdoor adventurers canoed the Duck, Buffalo and Harpeth rivers and cycled the Natchez Trace along with back roads of the Western Highland Rim.

The department's next travel writer tour will be in April in Middle East Tennessee. ■



## Tennessee Department of Tourist Development Open House

More than 150 tourism industry professionals, civic leaders, and state officials attended the TDTD Open House on Nov. 19 at the department's new offices in the William Snodgrass/Tennessee Tower. After more than 15 years of being housed in the Rachel Jackson building, the open house gave the department an opportunity to showcase their new offices and network with industry leaders.



*Photos from top left - clockwise: Rep. Steve McDaniel and TDTD legislative liaison Cullen Earnest; Wil Simons of the Van Buren County Executive's office, TDTD director of sales Lee Curtis, and Amy McBroom of Geiger & Associates; Mona Herring and Wendy Bryant of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce and Anthony Lucas of the Tennessee Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; TDTD assistant commissioner Phyllis Qualls-Brooks and Rep. John Litz.*

### Welcome to Cullen Earnest!

Cullen Earnest joins the department as legislative liaison. Cullen is a MTSU graduate with a B.S. in Political Science. He has worked in state government since January, 2001, serving most recently in the Governor's Office and at the Bureau of TennCare. Cullen also has experience with the Board of Regents, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Nashville Speedway USA.

"My father, Joe Earnest, worked for the Opryland USA for over 25 years, so I inherently developed great respect for the magnitude of the tourism industry in our state," Earnest said.

Earnest's duties as legislative liaison for the department include assisting Commissioner Whitaker in tracking legislation and serving as a point of contact between the General Assembly, Governor's Office and the department.

Earnest can be reached at (615) 741-7843 or at [Cullen.Earnest@state.tn.us](mailto:Cullen.Earnest@state.tn.us). ■



## News Bureau Generates Media Coverage Around the Globe

In the first six months of operation, the TDTD News Bureau has placed news stories in media located in 41 states and in eight foreign countries including Japan, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, Australia, Germany and Switzerland.

The News Bureau distributed more than 340 stories submitted from the state's industry partners during the last six months while creating and pitching an array of targeted national features.

The media coverage generated by the News Bureau has hit a print circulation of more than 69 million, which translates into 172.5 million impressions or the actual number of people viewing the publication. If the stories had been advertisements about Tennessee, they would have had an advertising value of more than \$500,000.

"The first six months have been very successful. The awareness by media of a news bureau takes time to build, and we are seeing outstanding results with media registrations ranging from the national AP travel editor and *USA Today* to daily papers in our own state," said Phyllis Qualls-Brooks, assistant commissioner for marketing.

"Just like advertising, editorial placements drive traffic and inquiries about Tennessee, and we saw results with our fall foliage news placements. More than half of our inquiries this fall were placed by people who read stories about Tennessee's fall foliage. We're now working on placements to help drive our spring and summer traffic."

The bureau's fall foliage feature was one of its most popular generating placements in publications such as: *The Washington Times*; *National*

*Geographic Adventure*; *Dallas Morning News*; *Houston Chronicle*; *Associated Press*; *Greenwood Springs, CO Post Independent*; *Burlington, NJ County Times*; *Dalton, GA Daily Citizen*; and *Cherry Hill, NJ Courier Post*.

The following is a sampling of outlets that have carried stories generated by the News Bureau:

**NEWSPAPER:** *The Orlando Sentinel*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Kansas City (MO) Star*, *Associated Press (National and International Wire)*, *USA Today*, *London Daily Times*, *San Jose (CA) Mercury News*, *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, *Dallas Morning News*, *Charlotte (NC) Observer*, *Gold Coast (Australia) Bulletin*, *The Mercury (Australia)*, *Halifax (Canada) Daily News*, and *Boston Globe*.

**TELEVISION:** *CBS This Morning*, *Sky Television/London*, *Great American Country*, *CMT*, *Turner South*, *Ft. Smith/Fayetteville, AR*; *Des Moines, IA*; *Portland, OR*; *Charlotte, NC*; *Washington, DC*; *Phoenix, AZ*; *Atlanta, GA*; *Paducah, KY*; *Richmond, VA*; and *Winston-Salem, NC*

Through the month of October, 259 industry partners have registered on the [www.tenntravelnews.com](http://www.tenntravelnews.com) Web site, while 300 members of the media have registered. ■

### Tennessee Tourism Results Touted in National Media

News reports detailing the success of Tennessee's \$10.6 billion tourism industry were picked up by newspapers across the United States this fall, following the announcement of the 2003 economic impact results during the 2004 Governor's Conference on Tourism.

During the conference, Commissioner Susan Whitaker announced the department's 2003 economic impact figures and distributed them to the media in a news release detailing the numbers and the new advertising campaign. As a result, more than 35 newspapers from California to Massachusetts ran stories touting the results and the successful ad campaign. Headlines ranged from "Tourism on the Increase at Tennessee Hot Spots" to "Come See Tennessee."

The media coverage included newspapers such as *The Boston Globe*; *Vancouver, WA Columbian*; *Ithaca, NY Observer-Dispatch*; *Detroit News Free-Press*; *Las Vegas Review Journal*; *Buffalo, NY News*; *Ft. Myers, FL News-Press*; *Muncie, IN Star*; *Riverside, CA Press Enterprise*; *Torrance, CA Daily Breeze*; *Longmont, CO Sunday Tribune*; and *the Manchester, CT Journal Inquirer*. ■

### News Briefs:

The Tennessee Department of Tourist Development announces a new addition to our Web site, the Research Links page. This page provides a coordinated link to a host of complimentary tourism-related research, trends and industry updates. The new links can be found [www.tntourism.com](http://www.tntourism.com) under Research & Reports.

This information is part of the department's ongoing efforts to provide detailed and timely information for those who are interested in the area of tourism development in Tennessee. Some links may require a password or subscription for access. On occasion a site may include a report which takes an editorial position on a particular development or story; it is important to know the Department does not necessarily endorse these positions, rather, has included the links for informational purposes only. ■

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Send your comments and suggestions to the editor, Lorene Lambert, at (615) 741-9025 or [Lorene.Lambert@state.tn.us](mailto:Lorene.Lambert@state.tn.us). We welcome your input as we work together to put the spotlight on Tennessee!

